UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
Seventh meeting
held on
Thursday, 17 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland)

later: Mr. ALPMAN (Turkey)
(Vice-Chairman)

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91-61481 6632V (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/46/PV.7
21 October 1991

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. SEN (Singapore): Since this is the first time I have addressed the Committee, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee on your elections. We pledge to you our full coooperation and support. We are confident that under your wise and experienced leadership the work of the Committee will proceed smoothly and efficiently.

With so much discussion these days about the new world order, we thought it might be useful and relevant to examine the general subject of disarmament in the context of the new world order. First, we shall define what we mean by the new world order; secondly, we shall discuss its implications for the new security order and, thirdly, we shall offer some thoughts on these implications.

The new world order is a nebulous concept and has as many definitions as there are definers. We think that one of the more useful, more balanced definitions came from the high-level panel discussion held under the aegis of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in Atlanta on 8 June 1991. This definition states that:

"the new world order should be perceived as an order based on justice and peace, democracy and development, human rights and international law. In short, the new world order should be based on global morality. The new world order should lead to a better world, having fair arrangements for all. It should sustain positive international relationships, be based on a true partnership between the powerful and the weak, the North and the

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South. It should therefore be collectively defined, collectively designed and collectively defended."

The Panel also felt that the United Nations Charter should be used as the framework of the new world order.

If this visionary new world order is to be achieved, then disarmament efforts must be even more vigorously pursued by all nations in order to achieve a truly peaceful world. This implies that political will must be applied by all nations and that the sources of conflict, whether they be economic disparities between North and South or political distrust between nations, must be adequately addressed in a new security order.

A second salient point about the new world order needs to be noted, namely, that its most important feature is that it is a multipolar world instead of a bipolar world, a world brought about by the ideological and economic collapse of one side. This, in turn, creates a unique opportunity for general deescalation of the global nuclear threat. The changes in geopolitics and geoeconomics, which are still ongoing, will, however, create an entirely different new security order in the near future.

To cite only one example of such changes, the demise of the Warsaw Pact leaves the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) without a raison d'être; hence, NATO must find a new role or become increasingly anachronistic. The humanitarian aid provided to Banqladesh by United States armed forces leaving the Gulf region provides an interesting foretaste of such future roles.

A third salient point about the new world order is that the end of ideological competition may see the increasing saliency of religious and economic competition, with increasing outbreaks of nationalism in hitherto oppressed regions and minorities. For the more-developed countries, the

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unity and discipline imposed by the cold war may be replaced by stronger economic competition for markets and resources. For the developing world, ethnic and reliqious differences may give rise to various civil wars. These factors will certainly impact on the new security order.

While we should note that it is still evolving, the new security order is likely to contain the following features: First, arising from the Gulf conflict, a new feature may be the possible threat or use of international enforcement action under United Nations authority against future aggressors and transgressors of international law. While this may be reassuring to the smaller and weaker States, other more powerful States may feel alienated by this prospect. Secondly, the new world order may see the rise of regional security organizations, some underpinned by external security guarantees - as for example in the Gulf region. Thirdly, there may be increasing interest in and action on arms-limitation agreements and other forms of confidence- and security-building measures. Fourthly, a feature may be efforts to stop proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and control arms transfers. Fifthly, there may be a North-South debate on global security issues, and increasing third-world resistance to linkages and conditionality on arms and official development assistance. Lastly, we may see increasing competition between arms suppliers for a shrinking arms market.

While the concept of a new world order has received much attention in the world media, in academic and scholarly journals and in the course of the general debate at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, much less attention has been paid to the security and disarmament aspects of the new world order. This is perhaps due as much to the esoteric nature of those aspects as to the recent and complex nature of the most important announcements made on nuclear disarmament - namely, those made recently by

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Presidents Bush and Gorbachev. These include the complete elimination of tactical, short-range nuclear weapons. Deep cuts in long-range weapons have also been proposed in the wake of the signature of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and both sides have decided to reduce the high-alert levels of their nuclear forces. The whole world welcomes these cuts and reductions in the American and Soviet nuclear forces but recognizes that the nuclear arsenals of both sides are still immense, enough to destroy the world several times over.

At the same time, world attention has been alerted to the danger of nuclear proliferation by countries that possess the determination, the resources and the international network of support from foreign companies to acquire nuclear weapons. The recent and ongoing drama in the Gulf demonstrates the danger of single-minded countries working clandestinely to acquire the bomb. It illustrates the paradox of the two super-Powers' divesting themselves of some parts of their nuclear arsenals while would-be nuclear Powers struggle determinedly to acquire nuclear status. It is a reflection of the have-nots' determination to achieve parity with the haves in the military-security field owing to their feelings of insecurity.

World attention has also been focused on the proliferation of other forms of weapons of mass destruction, for example chemical and biological, as well as of delivery systems in the form of long-range rockets, despite the best efforts of the missile technology control régime. This unprecedented proliferation of various types of weapons of mass destruction needs to be seriously addressed within the United Nations system, and new and more effective checks must be devised against would-be violators of various control régimes. The recent Gulf conflict has also drawn attention to the potency

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of precision guided munitions. Hence, a whole new range of expensive weapons has become the latest attraction for many armed forces that feel the need to keep up to date with the latest weapons.

It can therefore be expected that global disarmament efforts should also now concentrate on controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Recognition should also be given to the increasing military strength of several major non-traditional military Powers. Such new major military Powers might ponder whether even the possession of weapons of mass destruction would be effective in deterring United-Nations-sanctioned coalitions of great Powers if they intended to cross the line laid down by the United Nations.

Thus, the new security order comprises two nuclear super-Powers that are reducing their nuclear weaponry, as well as increasingly powerful non-traditional military Powers. Both trends have political and security implications which are important to note.

At the level of the two super-Powers, the recent cuts in tactical nuclear weapons have increased the possibility of even more radical reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

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This has enhanced global security and reduced the chances of global nuclear war. It is not without its negative aspects. For instance, the costs of dismantling thousands of Soviet nuclear weapons will be very high, at a time when the USSR faces severe economic difficulties. The conversion of the Soviet nuclear-weapon complex, involving the release of thousands of Soviet engineers and scientists into new fields of employment, is another difficult challenge.

For the West, these conversion and dismantling costs will also be high but may be more affordable. The greater challenge for the West is how to avoid giving the impression of decoupling the United States from Western Europe's security as the United States nuclear umbrella is slowly being withdrawn - which only involves the removal of United States tactical nuclear weapons at this stage. Both the West and the USSR also have to tackle the problem of removing Soviet tactical nuclear weapons from the Soviet republics in a safe and efficient manner. For the Soviet Union, the eventual and total reduction of its nuclear weapons would also mean giving up its remaining claim to super-Power status; hence there will be a floor below which no further cuts can be agreed upon.

For other nations, these subtle changes in United States-Soviet nuclear relations will also mean a need to reassess their security relationships. For instance, how will Japan and Western Europe regard the United States if they no longer need to rely on the United States nuclear umbrella against a much-reduced or non-existent Soviet threat? Will threat perceptions of the West shift, to focus on possible nuclear or chemical threats from new military Powers? Will the Soviet Union and the West now focus on curbing the nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction proliferating amongst developing

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countries? It is against those shifts in global security considerations that many developing countries may view recent proposals on international arms transfers.

Discussion of the implications of the new world order has perhaps stimulated a re-formulation of the concept of global security. This issue has been dealt with in an interesting article by Professor Michael D. Intriligator in the well-known review Disarmament, published by the United Nations. As it is readily available, we need not go into detail except to mention two interesting concepts developed in this article. First, Professor Intriligator has suggested:

> "Thus the traditional concepts of 'national security' and 'international security' must be replaced by the newer concept of 'global security', defined here as the absence of or avoidance of threats to the vital interests of the planet .... [G]lobal security, if it can be achieved, is an international public good, for which more security for one nation does not mean less security for another". (Disarmament, volume XIV, number 4, 1991, pp. 63-64)

While we may quibble over the definition of what constitutes "the vital interests of the planet", what is interesting is that Professor Intriligator postulates that global security is not a zero-sum game. Since limitations of space will prevent us from exploring further the nuances and implications of these concepts, we will leave further discussion to more qualified experts. However, in case there is any further curiosity on the elaboration of these ideas, it suffices to mention that Professor Intriligator has identified nine issue areas involved in the new conceptualization of security in a global framework.

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We think it is timely and relevant for the United Nations, particularly those organs devoted to disarmament, such as the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee, to consider, debate and evaluate such major shifts in the global security order, new ideas and concepts and their implications for North-South relations. Global security is enhanced when nations cooperate in new security approaches rather than investing scarce global resources in military expenditures which they cannot afford. Even mighty super-Powers can become economically exhausted by indulging in excessive nuclear-arms and conventional-arms races. The United Nations, being the neutral body representing all the world and alone possessing the moral authority, is the right forum to discuss new approaches to global security.

Mr. VAJPAYEE (India): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation extends its congratulations to you and the other officers of the Committee on your election to your posts. It is indeed heartening to see the representative of Poland, with which India has close ties, presiding over our work. We have full confidence that this session of the First Committee will enable us, under your able guidance, to move forward on the issues before the Committee. My delegation would like to assure you and the other officers of our full cooperation in your efforts to achieve useful results.

I labour a truism when I say that our work in the First Committee this year will evolve against the backdrop of far-reaching changes in the international arena. In recent months the United Nations has begun to assume a more meaningful role as a global peace-keeping institution. India has always been supportive of the ideals and objectives of the Charter and will continue to work towards strengthening the Organization's peace-keeping and developmental role.

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Much that commands attention has happened in the fields of international relations and disarmament over the past few years. The world is beginning to get accustomed to living in a world free from ideological confrontation. The social, political and economic transformation of Eastern Europe, the ongoing process of political and economic restructuring and the failure of the coup in the Soviet Union, the unification of Germany and the ending of the cold war have brought about an explosion of pluralism, freedom and democracy, and hopes for market-oriented economies.

The conclusion of a treaty on strategic-arms reduction - the START Treaty - between the United States and the USSR is a historic development which demonstrates that even the most complex issues can be resolved given the necessary political will. Even though START reductions are limited and are confined to numbers without affecting the quality of the weapons, they have underscored - as indeed the 1987 bilateral agreement on the elimination of land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles had done - that it is possible to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race and achieve nuclear disarmament.

The far-reaching positive changes on the international scene have regrettably brought about increased violence, ethnic differences, conflicts and refugee flows. The international community will also have to consider the possible dangers inherent in split control over nuclear weapons. The silver lining is that this provides yet another opportunity to the nuclear-weapon Powers to rid the world of the nuclear threat. This prompted President Bush and President Gorbachev to announce unilateral nuclear-arms-reduction proposals, which my Government has enthusiastically welcomed. Proposals have been made for substantial cuts in key categories of nuclear arms by both countries. We hope these steps will be followed by more far-reaching, deeper

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and quicker measures for nuclear-arms reduction, not only by the United States and the USSR but also by other nuclear-weapon States which have yet to demonstrate any significant action towards nuclear disarmament.

With the end of the cold war the international community can now forcefully question once again the validity of a strategy based on the possession and the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. The commitment of the international community to the view that weapons of mass destruction pose serious dangers and are a threat to the human race and civilization is universally recognized. The priorities in the field of disarmament have been clearly defined in special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Unfortunately the Assembly's recommendations have never been translated into universally accepted norms, principles and processes to deal with the dangers and eliminate the threat. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body, has been unable to commence actual negotiations on any of the crucial nuclear-disarmament issues.

Bilateralism and multilateralism cannot be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they must complement, facilitate and reinforce each another.

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We hail the new proposals for nuclear-arms cuts announced by the United States and the USSR. We would urge all nuclear-weapon States to hasten their climb down the ladder to a "nuclear-free world".

I have earlier referred to the possibility that successor States to nuclear-weapon Powers might claim authority and control over nuclear weapons stationed on their territories, leading to an increase in the number of nuclear-weapon States without an increase in the global stocks of nuclear weapons. It is clear that serious consideration needs to be given in the post-cold-war scenario to the attitudes, policies, doctrines, institutions and instruments required for a nuclear-weapon-free world. If we are to rid the world of the threat of nuclear annihilation, there is a pressing need for changing the attitude that the spread of nuclear-weapon capability to "delinquent" third-world States is the sole danger area with regard to nuclear proliferation. There is need to point out, as the Mexican representative has done, that closed-door "clubs", "groups" and "regimes" created to impose restrictions on trade in technology, equipment and material on a discriminatory basis will not solve proliferation problems. The only way is to eliminate all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons from the world and its outer space. This cannot be achieved by arms reduction proposals and initiatives which in reality only preserve the monopoly of a few States over nuclear weapons, missile technology and export markets for conventional weapons. It requires that old attitudes be discarded. It means that the world should rise above and beyond these limited initiatives and gather courage to work towards truly global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. It requires that uniform standards be applied to all countries.

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India presented a comprehensive proposal in the form of an action plan at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That has assumed increased relevance today. We aim at a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order. We have outlined a systematic, rational and practicable time frame in which to achieve those objectives. The core of the action plan is the elimination of all nuclear weapons in three stages over 22 years. We recognize the need for flexibility in the staging of these measures. We accept that all States - nuclear States, the threshold States and others - will have to accept obligations to achieve a stage-by-stage, controlled slide down the ladder to a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is our hope that our common objectives will benefit from a serious consideration of these proposals.

India has taken a principled stand against the discriminatory approach of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. But I should like here to recall that India played a pioneering role in placing the issue of non-proliferation on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. Along with seven other countries, India proposed a nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 1965 - General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX) - which was global in approach and non-discriminatory. Unfortunately, the 1968 non-proliferation Treaty failed to provide an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear States. As everyone knows, India has scrupulously adhered to a non-proliferation policy and has not helped any other nation to develop nuclear weapons. We are justifiably proud of our record on non-proliferation. If indeed deeds are genuinely considered to be more important than words or signatures, it is time the world recognized that fact.

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We must look to the priorities in the field of disarmament and seek to maintain a balance between global and regional efforts. The definition of a region has to encompass the full range of security concerns of the countries involved and also the practicability of the specific measures of disarmament suggested in this context. It is true that appropriate confidence-building measures, guidelines for which were elaborated by the Disarmament Commission in 1988, when applied in a comprehensive manner after taking into account the specific characteristics of the region and based on the consensus of States participating in the process, have the potential for contributing significantly to promoting and facilitating the attainment of disarmament measures. Since nations perceive their security indivisibly, compartmentalizing security through artificially designed regions cannot work. Each region has to be clearly defined. Arrangements have to be determined freely among the States concerned, taking into account the characteristics of the region. My delegation believes that prerequisites for any such arrangements are scrupulous adherence to basic principles of international relations, such as non-interference in internal affairs and non-incitement to terrorism, secessionism or subversion, and appropriate confidence-building measures, which in turn could lead to disarmament measures.

The arms build-up, which has spiralled as a result of the increased military expenditure on the part of the big military spenders and exporters, affects developing countries doubly: first, the increasing expenditure on armaments reduces the resources available for economic development and growth, and, secondly, it fuels further competitive expenditure on defence requirements for the security needs of the developing countries. India believes that steps should be taken to curb this trend at both the national

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and the global level. India has already taken a step in that direction in its last budget. The success of these efforts will depend to a large extent on the restraint that major arms exporters are able to impose on their exports of arms. It also depends on the curbing of military aid for the purchase of weapons. It would necessarily have to be ensured that arms freed as a result of disarmament measures in one region not be diverted to other countries or organizations. In this regard, the proposal to make arms transfers among countries more transparent through a United Nations register is a welcome one.

It has been the hope of many countries and peoples around the globe that arms control measures and unilateral restraints and cuts in nuclear arms will generate a massive peace dividend which will be channelized for the productive and development-oriented needs of developing countries. This has, sadly, not happened. My delegation would strongly urge that disarmament not be seen purely as a military or tactical exercise in deterrence; it should be viewed in the broader context of eradication of poverty and promotion of development throughout the world.

For many years India has proposed both at the Conference on Disarmament and at the General Assembly that negotiations on a convention outlawing the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the necessary first step for the elimination of such weapons and for the prevention of nuclear war. There exists no ironclad guarantee against the use of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear-weapon States themselves have visualized possible failure of the technology systems on which human beings rely and have undertaken steps to prevent the outbreak of accidental nuclear war. A convention on the non-use

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of nuclear weapons not only will remove the threat of a nuclear holocaust that looms over our planet but will also remove the justification for nuclear weapons. In the face of the danger of common annihilation, the distinction between the powerful and the weak is meaningless. The sentiment that a nuclear war must not be fought needs to be formalized as a multilateral commitment.

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Closely linked to the idea of a convention prohibiting the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear weapons is the appeal to nuclear-weapon States to apply an immediate freeze on the production of these weapons and fissile material for weapons purposes. The fissile material released from the dismantling of the nuclear warheads should be placed under international supervision and not recycled into more advanced weapons systems. The political momentum that has been generated by the successful Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the recent proposals of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics regarding further reductions in nuclear warheads can be carried to its logical conclusion by multilateral negotiations to bring in other nuclear-weapon States that have so far remained outside the process.

Another related issue in the field of nuclear disarmament is the nuclear-weapon-test ban. The Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which India had the honour to chair, was re-established this year, but once again without a fully-fledged mandate to negotiate a nuclear-test-ban treaty. In this connection, India welcomes the unilateral moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons proposed by President Gorbachev. We invite all nuclear-weapon States to announce similar moratoriums. We would strongly urge that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban be re-established next year with a positive negotiating mandate.

The report of the Secretary-General made available at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly clearly brought out the fact that new scientific and technological developments and their application for the deployment of new weapons and weapons systems will adversely affect the international security environment, and complex technical problems will make the search for verification even more elusive.

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Given the fact that there are no barriers to knowledge, what is achieved by a handful of States today can be adopted by many more in the future. Since 1988, therefore, the delegation of India, along with other like-minded delegations, has been submitting a resolution which appeals for a collective agreement on the non-pursuit of certain paths that could have a destabilizing effect on the global security environment, rendering existing arms limitations meaningless.

Scientific and technological developments must be channelled in favour of peaceful uses. In our working paper on new technologies and the qualitative arms race, presented at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we outlined our suggestions in concrete terms. Consequent to the adoption of resolution 45/60 by the General Assembly, India looks forward to receiving at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly the suggestions for a framework for technological assessment by the Secretary-General, guided by, inter alia, the criteria suggested in his report (A/45/568) on this subject.

In the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva attention continues to be focused on the ongoing chemical-weapons negotiations. We are convinced that we are faced with the best opportunity in the coming year to wrap up a universal and non-discriminatory global convention banning the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons, eliminating existing stockpiles and ending production facilities. India is committed to working with all those delegations that wish to complete the work on this convention within a stipulated time-frame. What remains to be done in the field of verification, compliance and consultative mechanisms should be

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accomplished without further delay through common effort and understanding. This requires statesmanship and the ability to move away from narrow concerns or unjustified distrust in each other's commitment to the convention.

In keeping with the trends of the post-cold-war scenario, it is essential to ensure that States parties to the convention are not subjected to a dual regime, and that all existing discriminatory restrictions on trade relating to scheduled chemicals and equipment are removed upon entry into force of the convention. The convention must ensure the unimpeded right of States parties to develop, produce, use, exchange and transfer chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes, and should not hinder or impede international cooperation in peaceful areas of chemical-industry development.

We believe that a successful resolution of this issue in the chemical-weapons negotiations will promote and ensure a healthy universality for the chemical-weapons convention. Above all, it should be universally realized that the much greater good of humanity is at stake in achieving this convention, which should not be compromised for narrow short-term ends.

Outer space has been recognized by the international community as the common heritage of mankind. If the benefits from space research and technology are to accrue to all countries in the field of communications, meteorology and remote sensing, outer space has to be kept free of all weapons. New legal instruments need to be developed, instruments reflecting political reality as well as new technological developments.

In an increasingly interdependent world, the structure of international security should be based on universal participation, with each component supportive of the other. The progress in the chemical-weapons convention negotiations, the trend towards reduction and cuts in nuclear weapons, and the

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increasing realization that the peace dividend from reduction in military expenditure must be channelled for growth in developing countries are positive developments. This leads us to the hope that greater efforts and faster measures will be adopted to achieve a nuclear-weapons-free world. In such a post-cold-war scenario there is no place for outdated concepts of deterrence, balance of power, monopoly over nuclear weapons or missile technology. A new structure of international relations must be based on respect for sovereignty and equality, peaceful coexistence, security for all nations and the principles of the United Nations Charter. It is our hope that, given the positive international climate and political will, the Conference on Disarmament will be revitalized as a negotiating forum for nuclear disarmament.

Mr. SOMOGYI (Hungary): I wish to begin this statement with an expression of warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Let me also extend my good wishes to the other officers of the Committee. My delegation is confident that under your guidance we shall make a significant contribution to what we believe will be a productive session. You can rest assured of my delegation's full support in carrying out your important responsibilities.

I cannot conclude my introductory remarks without paying due tribute to the activities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Member States are fully aware of, and greatly appreciate, the exemplary efforts of the relatively small, but highly motivated, staff, so ably directed by Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi.

A year ago, in the midst of the Gulf crisis, the international community could not be sure whether the efforts to apply collective security measures through the United Nations would pass the test. We welcomed the fact that,

(Mr. Somogyi, Hungary)

after the failure of diplomatic attempts to avoid war, there was sufficient collective resolve within the United Nations to go all the way and restore the sovereignty of one of its Member States which had fallen victim to aggression. This accomplishment dispersed doubts about the ability of the world Organization to carry out its functions, enshrined in its Charter, relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The international community can feel satisfied that the intensity of developments in international affairs stimulated by the Gulf crisis, as well as by the dramatic events in Europe, did not prevent policy-makers and disarmament negotiators from producing significant results.

(Mr. Somogyi, Hungary)

Last July we welcomed a long-awaited achievement in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the Soviet Union and the United States on the reduction by some 30 per cent of their offensive nuclear arsenals will surely contribute to global security. It can also serve as a sound basis for further measures, including the elimination of large stocks of short-range nuclear weapons that are a source of special concern to countries like my own.

In this context, I wish to point out that Hungary warmly welcomed the recent initiative of the President of the United States concerning a whole set of unilateral steps in the field of nuclear disarmament, and is heartened by the very quick and positive response by the President of the Soviet Union.

Last year, important strides were made towards the universality of the most outstanding multilateral disarmament agreement - the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Both the increase in the number of States parties, and the decision in principle of two nuclear Powers to accede to the Treaty are encouraging developments. We are of the view that adherence to the Treaty by States that have not yet done so, and the unreserved implementation of all the obligations by States that are already parties to the Treaty, will certainly contribute to the better functioning of the NPT regime.

We strongly believe that the reduction of the nuclear arsenals and the strengthening of the NPT regime are basic elements on the way to a more secure Europe and a safer world.

In spite of the promising developments, we must, however, face the fact that no substantive progress has been made so far at the multilateral level. That continues to hold true for both the limitation of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of their tests.

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While a comprehensive test ban is still a distant promise, we may derive some satisfaction from the diminishing number of nuclear-test explosions and the unilateral moratorium recently announced by the Soviet Union.

At the beginning of 1991, the States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty (PTBT) convened in New York. The Conference failed to achieve any success, and it has created an unfortunate precedent. We continue to hold the firm view that substantial progress in the field of international security and disarmament can be achieved only if it is based on the full consent of all the parties involved. Consensus, therefore, remains for us the only constructive and acceptable method of taking decisions on questions of such dimensions.

The question of a nuclear-test ban is high on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This year's work of the relevant subsidiary body showed once again that only a step-by-step approach can advance the cause of a comprehensive test ban. Concentrating on certain technical issues of a future ban - for example, on the possible means of verification - might give enough work for the Ad Hoc Committee in the near future. Adopting such an approach will prevent us from stalling because of political difficulties. In this context, consideration should be given to broadening the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts by including other means of verification besides seismic methods.

The prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities continues to be a priority of Hungarian disarmament policy. We are sorry that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament produced very meagre results again this year. That is why we are looking for new ways and additional frameworks to advance

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the issue. The 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to be held in Budapest in the weeks to come, will, it is hoped, pay adequate attention to the problem.

The Third Review Conference of the Parties to the biological weapons Convention was an important event. The Conference lived up to the high expectations, and the adoption of its substantial Final Declaration can be considered as a long-awaited success of multilateral disarmament. The most important task now is to maintain this momentum. Against this background, more and more States parties should participate in the new, streamlined reporting system, thus proving their genuine interest in strengthening the regime and further enhancing confidence in the Convention. We are also pleased to note that the Review Conference has decided to convene a group of governmental experts to study questions and problems of verification. We can only hope that the cooperative spirit of the Conference will last long enough, thus enabling the expert group to do meaningful work.

We also find it promising that multilateral negotiations on the comprehensive and global prohibition of chemical weapons and on the destruction of their stockpiles have undergone positive changes. Not only has the atmosphere of the talks improved, but a major breakthrough has also been achieved. In our view, these developments have been facilitated, to a large extent, by the modified United States policy relating to chemical weapons. These welcome changes, as well as some initiatives launched in the aftermath of the Gulf War by the President of France, were also due to the fact that the war had clearly demonstrated the pressing need for the early conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. As a consequence, the envisaged undertaking

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never to use chemical weapons under any circumstances, now seems to be acceptable to all. By renouncing the right of retaliation, it has become possible to make a similar unconditional commitment to the total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles within a ten-year period.

We fully share the view that the success of any disarmament agreement largely depends on its proper and concrete verification system. The chemical weapons convention is no exception. This year, a vast amount of time and energy in the relevant Ad Hoc Committee was devoted to a verification system. The extra efforts have resulted in finding a more comprehensive approach to the verification of activities not prohibited by the Convention. Integrating the major and most relevant part of the international chemical industry in an adequate system of verification will undoubtedly help ensure that the chemical facilities are in fact not engaged in prohibited activities.

Routine verification is indispensable for the implementation of provisions but, in our view, the convention cannot dispense with an effective system of challenge inspections either. The principles and modalities of such inspections are being seriously considered in the Ad Hoc Committee. The in-depth study of these issues still reflects considerable conceptual divergences among the negotiating parties and much remains to be done before we arrive at a solution acceptable to all.

Apart from the inconclusive work on verification, tangible progress has been made on other elements of the draft convention. Fulfilling the new mandate adopted last summer will require further efforts. We fully support the idea that the negotiating body should remain in session to pursue the goal

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of concluding the convention in 1992. Perhaps advantage could also be taken of the presence of high-level political decision-makers to give additional political support and impetus to the negotiations.

This spring, the Disarmament Commission held its deliberations in dramatically new circumtances, marked not only by the end of the cold war, but also by the beginning of long-awaited reform measures aimed at revitalizing the Commission.

(Mr. Somogyi, Hungary)

We could see most directly that the reinvigoration of the international community was clearly in progress. The climate of the deliberations and the will to cooperate had improved significantly. The overwhelming majority of delegations showed a sincere desire to work out acceptable approaches to solve the issues under consideration.

I feel it proper to urge every delegation not to give in to the temptation of the relatively leisurely mandates of the working groups of the Commission. Their tasks are far from being simple. Let me emphasize that it is time for all of us to make better use of the favourable international climate.

We continue to attach great significance to the effective functioning of all multilateral disarmament forums and welcome any measure to improve their output. Guided by this spirit, we regret to have to point out once again the growing disharmony between the performance of these forums and the direction and speed of events having a direct impact on international security. These events have also created new security challenges, though, at the same time, they made it possible for the international community to take immediate action in certain areas.

It is our firm belief that one such area is the creation of greater transparency in international conventional arms transfers. In this connection, we fully associate ourselves with the idea of establishing a register for international conventional arms transfers within the framework of the United Nations. Accordingly, we support and co-sponsor the relevant draft resolution. We are convinced that the confidence-building value of such a register, which will keep track of conventional arms transfers, cannot be overemphasized.

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May I be permitted now to draw attention to a few issues which are of particular importance for a country like mine, situated in a presently rather volatile region of Europe. Prompted by geopolitical and historical necessity, Hungary has consistently pursued a policy aimed at achieving effective limitations of conventional armed forces on the continent. Accordingly, we signed, and have already ratified, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), which we consider the most far-reaching and complex regional arms control agreement ever negotiated. The CFE Treaty is of utmost importance not only for its large scope and unprecedented nature, but also because this was the first time in post-Second World War history that the term "military blocs", so often used in a divided Europe, was abandoned, in full harmony with the substantial changes in Europe and with the new political atmosphere expressed in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Joint Declaration of the 22 States.

We firmly believe that the force reductions negotiated among the 22 States will significantly enhance stability in Europe by achieving their initial aims, in particular, by eliminating the capability of surprise attacks and large-scale offensive operations. It is most important that the Treaty enter into force and be fully implemented as early as possible by all the parties, irrespective of changes that might have occurred in some of these States, so that the CFE Treaty should function properly and provide undiminished security for all. Thus, the Treaty, combined with the elements of a new generation of confidence- and security-building measures negotiated in Vienna, will constitute an essential foundation for a new security structure in Europe.

Having adopted a complex approach to security issues, the Hungarian

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Government has for quite some time been of the firm conviction that the security of a country must not be confined to its military aspects and, consequently, it cannot be established and maintained by military means alone. Other elements of security are equally important. Developments in our region clearly prove that political, economic, human rights and other problems pose direct threats to stability and security. Perceiving security in this modern, complex manner, our Government has elaborated a concept of security policy, and appropriate action in the National Assembly will follow soon.

In addition to the increased role of the United Nations and its Security Council in maintaining peace and security, our concept envisages a new European cooperative system of security that will incorporate elements that are now being formulated or further developed. One of those elements is the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Its enhancement and gradual institutionalization, the new mechanism established by the Charter of Paris, constitute an indispensable milestone on the road of adjusting our continent to the requirements of the twenty-first century. The continuation of the Helsinki process, especially in the field of the prevention of conflicts, the settlement of disputes and crisis situations, is, no doubt, of great importance and utmost urgency.

Another pillar of the emerging new European constellation would be, in our view, those institutions that have already proved to be successful in implementing universal principles and norms in promoting the various elements of genuine security. Hungary's close and effective cooperation with these institutions is very high among our priorities, since it is induced by the identical respect of democratic values as well as by the similarities of interests, social and moral objectives. It is in this spirit that we hope

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further to enhance our activity in the Council of Europe, to sign soon an agreement on our associated status with the Europe Community and to broaden, deepen and institutionalize our cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union. Thus, we seek to create a security partnership which will, even without full security guarantees, effectively contribute to promoting Hungary's national security. In this regard, we highly appreciate statements made by NATO and its member States emphasizing the indivisible nature of European security and resolutely expressing the direct interest of those States in the unhindered democratic development of the countries in East-Central Europe. We deem it appropriate that concrete measures be taken in harmony with those statements.

We hold that regional cooperation - such as the trilateral cooperation between Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, or the cooperation between the six countries of the Hexagonal - also have a stabilizing and beneficial effect on Central and Eastern Europe and provide States participating in them with a solid base for the fulfilment of their political, economic and social objectives.

In the light of the radical changes in Europe and in order to meet the new requirements brought about by those changes, Hungary wishes to conclude new types of bilateral treaties containing the guiding principles of our relationship with other European countries. We have already signed such documents with Italy, France and Poland and are very close to doing so with several other countries.

The emerging new European cooperative security system is now seriously challenged by the tragic developments in Yugoslavia. The crisis there does not only destabilize the region, but constitutes a direct threat to European security as a whole. The international community should take all the

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necessary steps to ensure an immediate end to the hostilities and to create appropriate conditions for settling that country's grave problems democratically, through negotiations, in a way acceptable to all the parties concerned.

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My Government has, from the very beginning, attached great significance to the Open Skies initiative and acted as host to the second round of the Conference in Budapest. Pending its third round, and in order to facilitate the identification and solution of the still outstanding problems related to an Open Skies Treaty, we have concluded a bilateral Open Skies Agreement with Romania. Our experience indicates that an Open Skies regime is feasible only when the would-be participants have the necessary political will to promote confidence and security through greater openness.

Another important conclusion has also been drawn from experience, namely, that Open Skies flights can be performed without considerable costs and can also be used for non-military purposes such as monitoring the environment and assessing the consequences of natural or industrial disasters, thereby supporting relief efforts.

We are further convinced that, in addition to other inspection regimes, Open Skies flights could also play a useful role in monitoring compliance with already existing and possible future disarmament agreements.

In general, we are of the firm view that in the future a broader Open Skies regime could play a major role in enhancing cooperative confidence and security. Consequently it would be not only useful, but even necessary, for a future co-operative security structure in Europe to establish a comprehensive multilateral Open Skies regime covering the entire territory of the parties.

During the last few years we have witnessed the usefulness of disarmament-related United Nations informational and educational activities. The successful dissemination of information has been promoted by centres for peace and disarmament already operating in three continents. In the light of the concrete disarmament measures agreed upon and being implemented in Europe,

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as well as in view of the interest shown in sharing relevant experiences, consideration should now be given to the establishment of a small United Nations unit in Europe also.

A United Nations regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Europe could follow developments in the field of regional conventional disarmament, regional confidence- and security-building measures and the implementation of non-conventional disarmament agreements. In doing so, the unit could meet the informational and educational needs of Member States related to disarmament developments and progress in building a cooperative security system in Europe. It could coordinate the implementation of regional activities under the World Disarmament Campaign of the United Nations. This clearly defined set of tasks would guarantee the effective and purpose-oriented functioning of the Centre.

Such a centre, if set up in Vienna, could build on existing United Nations resources and infrastructure and could profit from the vast intellectual capital of the international community available there. This solution would certainly minimize costs and would not entail serious financial implications.

We hope that this idea of establishing a European disarmament centre will be received with a sympathetic and positive response. With the arrival of propitious circumstances, our delegation will not fail to present to the Committee a draft resolution on this subject.

Mr. KUKAN (Czechoslovakia): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important and responsible post of Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is particularly happy to see you, a prominent representative of the friendly Republic of Poland, presiding over our deliberations. We have full confidence in your ability to guide the work of this Committee to meaningful

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results. I would like to assure you that the delegation of Czechoslovakia is ready to cooperate actively with you and the other members of the Bureau, as well as with all delegations, towards the achievement of constructive results at our session.

As a central European State witnessing the radical political changes in our part of Europe, we stated at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly that the session of the First Committee was being held under favourable conditions. This applies even more this year. The notion of the threat of a global conflict is gradually vanishing from the vocabulary of diplomacy. At the same time it is the children's disease of our time that, whereas the old is leaving irrevocably, new security structures in a qualitatively more favourable international atmosphere characterized by the new international order are just being born.

In the process of improving the international atmosphere, a positive role has been played by the development of Soviet-United States relations. We consider the proposal by President Bush for the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons and further significant limitations on strategic nuclear forces, together with the positive Soviet reaction to that initiative, to be a timely beginning of the last decade of our century. At the same time, we consider it important that no nuclear Power fall asleep on this starting-time.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to become prematurely self-satisfied. There is, unfortunately, a lot of evidence even in Europe that further development is not nor will be straightforward and without problems. In the first place, it is becoming evident to us that the transition of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to real democracy will be neither simple nor painless.

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The all-European process plays a key and irreplaceable role in the changes currently under way on our continent. The adoption of the Paris Charter for a New Europe put a formal full stop to the cold war. The generally recognized values of democracy and freedom have gained priority. The Charter has laid down new prospects for the development of cooperation in political, security, economic and humanitarian fields.

We consider it extremely important that participating States in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) have promoted steps leading to a further strengthening of confidence and security in Europe and to the creation of machinery to preserve stability. In this respect we have mainly in mind the setting up of the Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna, a body for settling emergency situations, and of the CSCE Council of Ministers holding regular as well as emergency meetings whenever necessary. The tragic events in Yugoslavia have put this new machinery to a severe trial. The fact that the Security Council deliberated on the situation and that it was also dealt with by the Secretary-General indicates that efforts within European institutions to find a solution have encountered problems. We hope that the peoples of Yugoslavia may find a way out of the crisis with the assistance of the international community.

Signing of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe is of paramount importance for the further strengthening of security on the European continent. We are glad that the contradictions regarding the interpretation of some provisions have been successfully overcome. Czechoslovakia was the first to ratify this Treaty.

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We believe that this process will be carried out successfully in the other States parties to the Treaty also. We are ready to begin to implement the Treaty without delay, and hope that this implementation will not be slowed down by the creation of new independent States in the zone of application that are not signatories to it. The achievement of a substantial reduction in conventional armed forces in this sensitive geographical area and thus of a radical reduction of the risk of a surprise attack or of extensive military operations is in our national interest. As regards the Czechoslovak army, the reduction involves the elimination of 2,000 tanks, 2,500 armoured military carriers, over 2,300 artillery systems and 100 combat planes.

We can note with satisfaction that the States participating in the CSCE process have already begun to implement new confidence- and security-building measures embodied in the Vienna Document of 1990. While it is premature to derive any far-reaching conclusions from this action, we can, even today, note some interesting facts: in many cases the numbers of troops taking part in military exercises are lower than planned. In addition to the inspections, information provided by the participating States on the deployment, numbers and structure of armed forces is being used, thus testifying to the growing confidence among the CSCE members.

In connection with the Gulf War, the urgent problem of the transfer of modern weapons systems and military technology to countries within the areas of high political tension has been brought to the foreground. This fact requires us to consider this issue seriously and, in many respects, change our unilateral and multilateral approaches to the whole problem of non-proliferation. In this regard, we support the proposals of the highest representatives of Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States of America and France.

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The findings of inspection teams of the United Nations Commission confirmed the concern of the world community: a State party to the non-proliferation Treaty has grossly violated its provisions. Let this memento become an immediate impulse for all members to strengthen our efforts to improve the non-proliferation regime, its control mechanism and the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. At the same time, we have to strive for the extension of the NPT in 1995 without any preliminary conditions.

The Gulf crisis has also demonstrated the urgency and necessity of strengthening control over exports of materials, equipment and technologies that could be misused for the development and production of nuclear, chemical or bacteriological weapons. We therefore welcome the fact that, within the Australian Group and the London Club, the States have been adopting measures for tightening the control over exports of these commodities. We are also in favour of access to this control mechanism by the greatest possible number of States that are potential suppliers. However, these measures should not impede other States from obtaining new technologies for peaceful purposes.

The uncontrolled trade in arms represents one of the most serious threats to stability in the regions of increased tension and thus to security all over the world. Therefore, we join the appeals addressed to States to show restraint in the export and import of conventional weapons and modern technologies for military purposes and to implement or improve, where it is expedient, national control of conventional arms transfers.*

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* Mr. Alpman (Turkey), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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In June of this year, in New York, a group of United Nations experts successfully completed their study on ways and means to of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms. They propose, inter alia, that a register of conventional arms transfers be established within the United Nation system hoslovakia considers this initiative for the establishment of a universal and non-discriminatory register as one of the most up-to-date and most important items on the agenda of the First Committee at this session.

In our opinion, the issue of the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons is a most urgent one. The search for a successful solution to this problem will be a general test of the international prestige of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and of its ability to act. We consider the statement made by President Bush on 13 May 1991 concerning the new United States approach towards chemical weapons and his appeal for intensification of the negotiations on the global chemical weapons convention with a view to promoting its signing at an early date, a timely and significant impulse towards reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament.

For Czechoslovakia, which does not possess, produce or stockpile chemical weapons in its territory, the conclusion of a global chemical weapons convention, to which it wishes to be one of the origignal parties, constitutes a matter of top priority in its foreign policy aimed at strengthening global security, arms limitation and disarmament.

In the interest of building confidence among the States negotiating the text of the convention, we have already published detailed information at the Conference on Disarmament about the chemical potential of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic relevant to this convention. From this information, it is

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clear that all research and laboratory work carried out in Czechoslovakia serves exclusively peaceful purposes and as protection against the effects of chemical weapons.

The establishment of a certain system of guarantees that could prevent any possibility of bypassing or violating the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction was one of the items considered by the Third Review Conference that was recently concluded in Geneva. We welcome the Final Document of the Conference, and are convinced that its implementation will become an impulse for the strengthening of this Convention. The widening of confidence- and security-building measures and the flexible mandate conferred upon the expert group that is to examine potential verification mechanisms are steps in the right direction.

The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic welcomes every step taken by the nuclear Powers towards the reduction of nuclear armaments and towards disarmament, which would significantly reduce the nuclear risk and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This process should eliminate some justified concerns on the part of the non-aligned countries and, in this regard, provide them with just, balanced and legally binding security guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them.

The issue of banning all nuclear tests is also a delicate and an urgent one. In order to clarify our standpoint, I would like to reiterate that Czechoslovakia considers the nuclear-test ban an important part of nuclear disarmament. We are of the opinion that the Conference on Disarmament should remain the most suitable negotiating forum for this purpose. The mandate of the Ad Hoc committee should provide enough flexibility to allow all political, technical and other aspects of the nuclear test ban to be considered.

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We are at the same time aware of the existing significant differences in opinions of and approaches to a comprehensive nuclear test ban. My delegation advocates a gradual solution of the question of halting nuclear tests. We are concerned that the attempts of some countries to cut the Gordian knot, that is to settle the problem of banning nuclear tests right off, are unrealistic. We also regard as inadmissible the attempts to make the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty after 1995 conditional on the earlier conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In the interests of making progress in this sphere we shall, inter alia, also support initiatives aiming to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, especially a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as put forward by President Mubarak. There are also new possibilities emerging concerning confirmation of the nuclear-free status of Africa. We believe that the accession of South Africa to the Non-Proliferation Treaty together with concluding a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be reflected also in the formulation of the draft of the pertinent resolution of the First Committee.

A significant reduction of national military expenditures has accompanied the development of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Peace dividends are, however, fully used in money-consuming, though vitally important, projects for the conversion of military production into civilian production. At present we consider the full transparency of military expenditures to be the first step in their reduction. We therefore think it is inevitable that other States also should, within the standardized United Nations system, provide information on the structure and amount of their

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military budgets. The time has also come to react positively in the First Committee to the proposals to improve this system.

This year the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic again supplied the United Nations with information on its military expenditures. In 1990 these expenditures amounted to $US 1.07 billion as against $US 1.2 billion in 1989. We are ready to continue to provide this data and capable of extending its scope.

A significant shift can also be seen in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Intensive consultations in 1989 and 1990 aimed at making its work more efficient are beginning to bear fruit. A large number of fresh ideas give rise to justified hopes for a successful conclusion of all four items on the present agenda.

The consultations of the chairmen of the different working groups with the relevant delegations prior to the meeting of the Commission are very useful. Alongside the necessary process of bringing opinions up to date, the most sensitive issues on the agenda are being identified and possible compromise solutions may be reached.

Allow me to conclude my statement by expressing the wish that our current deliberations will be fruitful and successful and that they will contribute considerably to the overall efforts aimed at arms limitation and disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation warmly welcomes the election of Mr. Robert Mroziewicz of Poland to preside over the affairs of the First Committee at this General Assembly session. We also congratulate other members of the Bureau. We are certain that under his chairmanship the

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Committee will significantly contribute towards the realization of our shared goals of strengthening international peace and security.

On a rather sad note my delegation wishes to convey its heartfelt condolences to the Mexican delegation on the death of Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles in Mexico in September. We recall with nostalgia his regular and effective participation in the work of this Committee in the past. As the "Dean of Disarmament" his outstanding contribution and dedication to the cause of a comprehensive programme of disarmament will always be remembered.

The First Commmittee is meeting at an auspicious period when there are dramatic changes in international relations. The growing spirit of cooperation between the super-Powers manifested itself in the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) last July by the United States and the Soviet Union, a Treaty which is intended to reduce their strategic arsenals by 30 per cent. We welcome the recent announcement by President Bush of the unilateral reduction of United States tactical missiles and the reciprocal action by President Gorbachev. These are commendable efforts although the strategic arms control agenda is far from exhausted.

In virtually all regions of the world, we are witnessing no less fundamental political changes. Some of these changes are no doubt very positive in nature and augur well for the future. But there are others which clearly point to uncertainties ahead and therefore constitute challenges in evolving a new world order. Although the shape and form of that new world order are not definitive, the role of the First Committee in helping to build a global consensus on the important security questions that would define that

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order is evident. As my President stated in his address to the General Assembly on 4 October:

"This new world order must be collectively defined, collectively designed and collectively defended." (A/46/PV.22, p. 43-45)

In the view of my delegation, effective disarmament thus constitutes a core around which the new order should be built. By enhancing security at lower levels of armaments and by releasing vital resources from the military to the socio-economic sphere, disarmament can promote global security and at the same time accelerate social, economic and environmental development. In confronting this challenge, my delegation believes that the Committee should look critically at the issues, establish new modalities, jettison stereotypes and rationalize our work to achieve our goals. Indeed, Nigeria believes that, during this session especially, we must be courageous enough to abandon the "business as usual" approach which has diffused our attention, with general discussions on important issues ending in little or no action. We should thus make this session action-oriented and responsive to present-day challenges.

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We now have an unprecedented opportunity to make this new world order a reality. Foremost in this sphere is the need to focus anew on the total elimination of nuclear weapons from nations' arsenals as a matter of priority. The East-West ideological rivalry that fuelled the nuclear-arms race has now given way to a new era of cooperation, which demands the abandonment of old doctrines and assumptions governing the acquisition, deployment and utilization of nuclear weapons. The relentless development and acquisition of increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons could only foster a sense of insecurity. Indeed, it would engender a feeling of betrayal among the "nuclear have-nots", who have worked so tirelessly and sacrificed so much to achieve a nuclear-free world. We therefore resolutely reject the concept and practice of military superiority.

The question of nuclear disarmament can be decisively addressed only in the context of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The retention and continued sophistication of nuclear weapons will only encourage proliferation and, therefore, threaten the non-proliferation regime. We need not emphasize once again the interdependence between a comprehensive test-ban treaty and continued confidence in the non-proliferation Treaty beyond 1995. There is a need to move beyond the current half-measures, which are no doubt welcome but do not yet touch the core of the existing sophisticated nuclear arsenals. The time is therefore ripe for rapid movement towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

As a start, the international community must prohibit entirely the acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction - whether nuclear, chemical or biological. The spectre of the use of chemical and biological weapons during the recent Gulf War dramatically brought to the fore once again the particular need for the urgent conclusion of a convention on the

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comprehensive, effective and verifiable prohibition of chemical weapons. We note with satisfaction that, after about two decades of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament, considerable progress has been made towards the early conclusion of the convention. The resolution, during this year, of the contentious issues of the total destruction of chemical-weapons stocks and the unconditional prohibition of the use of such weapons was an important breakthrough. Progress in other areas - such as the provision of assistance and protection, and economic and technological cooperation - also significantly advanced the negotiations. At this concluding stage of the negotiations it is essential that delegations demonstrate greater perseverance and flexibility in order to overcome the remaining difficult issues, including that of verification.

The biological-weapons Convention is equally a matter of interest to the international community, as was demonstrated recently at the Third Review Conference. Besides identifying the shortcomings in the Convention, the Conference agreed, in its Final Declaration, on several proposals whose faithful implementation by States parties would strengthen the Convention.

Let me again emphasize that Nigeria does not possess biological or chemical weapons, nor does it intend to acquire them. To reinforce our commitment to, and to raise national awareness of, the peaceful uses of chemical technology, Nigeria held a national seminar in Lagos last July on the future of the chemical-weapons convention. The importance that we attach to the proposed convention is motivated by our desire to achieve an agreement consistent with global-security concerns, but, at the same time, to guarantee that the development of our chemical industry will not be impeded. In this regard, I wish to commend the Under-Secretary-General in the Department for

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Disarmament Affairs for his support for the seminar. We look forward to his cooperation in the case of the proposed African regional seminar on chemical weapons and confidence-building measures, which is scheduled for 1992.

As the Secretary-General states in his report on the work of the Organization for the forty-sixth session,

"Dismantling the military edifice of the cold war should mean designing a credible architecture for regional security." (A/46/1, p. 12)

As an element of the international system, the security of the various regions of the world is crucial to overall global security. While recognizing this interdependence, however, we must be conscious of the different characteristics, historical realities and asymmetries in each region, which create their peculiar problems of insecurity, suspicion or conflicts. Appropriate local mechanisms must thus be designed, with the active support of the United Nations and the international community, to promote security, confidence-building measures, crisis prevention and crisis management, and conflict resolution in a given region, without outside attempts to impose solutions alien to such regions.

It is against this background that at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission - held in May - my delegation participated actively in the debate on the new agenda item "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security". It is our hope that the 1992 session will produce concrete recommendations on ways and means of enhancing regional security as an integral element of global peace. We also look forward to greater progress on the other three agenda items before the Disarmament Commission - those relating to nuclear weapons; objective information on

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military matters; and the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

While the 1989 reforms undertaken by this Committee may have started to have a salutary effect on the work of the Disarmament Commission, the same cannot be said about the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which, since 1979 - apart from commendable progress in the negotiations on the chemical-weapons convention, which I mentioned earlier - has not recorded any meaningful achievement on the issues before it. The lack of a negotiating mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee with regard to a nuclear-test ban and related issues poses serious challenges to the future credibility of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

One of the decisions taken at the summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at Abuja, Nigeria, last June dealt with the implementation of the 1964 Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. It will be recalled that Nigeria, in conjunction with other African countries, initiated General Assembly resolution 45/56 A - adopted on 4 December 1990 - under which the Secretary-General convened a meeting of experts in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last May to examine the modalities and elements for the preparation and implementation of a convention or treaty on the denuclearization of Africa. It is noteworthy that the objectives of the meeting are consistent with our commitment to the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Africa - a commitment that remains firm and irrevocable. My delegation will, of course, have the opportunity to comment on the report in due course.

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We are aware of the pervasive feeling of optimism in certain circles that the conclusion and signature by South Africa of the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), subsequent to its accession in July to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), have diminished - if not totally removed - the threat posed by South Africa's nuclear programme and attendant weapon capability. Undoubtedly, this development bodes well for non-proliferation. However, the journey along that road and the removal of the threat have only just begun. The process could be moved forward only if the entire range of South Africa's nuclear installation and matériel are placed under full-scope IAEA safeguards.

As developments in other regions indicate, the cooperation of the international community with the Agency in that process is particularly crucial to the instauration of confidence that South Africa will abide by the intent and letter of its agreement. We believe that such cooperation is invaluable also to the renewed efforts of the OAU to create a nuclear-free zone in Africa and to achieve lasting peace and security in our region.

Our concept of security goes beyond the traditional concerns of military security. Like the rest of the world, what Nigeria - and, indeed, Africa - needs now more than at any time in the past are: a stable, peaceful and secure environment for our development; the freedom and right to pursue our own chosen path; the realization of a more equitable international system; the acquisition of scientific and technological knowledge to enable us to meet the growing needs of our peoples; and regional and international cooperative efforts in solving our common problems. It is a matter of both enlightened self-interest and the future stability of our world, which dictates that we

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give focused attention to the integration of the quest for disarmament, security and development, the greatest challenges of our time.

We are at a point in history when for the first time, perhaps, in this century the prospects of turning swords into plowshares abound. Let me reaffirm that the changes occurring in many parts of the world are most welcome. However, in view of the major challenges ahead we must guard against complacency. We cannot afford the resurgence of old tensions under whatever guise. The consequences of failing to act creatively and collectively would be enormous. Working together, we can again give mankind renewed hope.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.